

Application No. 09/982,617

Docket No.: 65783-0007

REMARKS

This response is intended to be fully responsive to the non-final Office Action ("Office Action") having a mailing date of March 16, 2006, wherein claims 1-41 were rejected. Claims 11, 21-28, 36, and 37 are amended to more clearly identify the claim elements. Applicants have carefully reviewed the Office Action and thank the Examiner for the detailed review of the pending claims. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the following remarks.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 4, 7, 9, 11, 14, 17, 19, 22, 24-30, 32, 33, 36, 38 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,678,892 to Lavelle et al. ("Lavelle").

A. Independent Claim 1

Claim 1 recites, in part:

an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network;
a multi-format decoder for decoding at least two different encoding formats for an
audiovisual data stream;
a microcontroller for controlling said interface stage and said decoder; and
connections for connecting said decoder to one or more audiovisual output
devices.

(Emphasis added). Lavelle teaches an entertainment unit for a vehicle. (See Abstract). However, Lavelle does not teach "an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network." (Emphasis added). Further, Lavelle does not disclose "a multi-format decoder for decoding at least two different encoding formats for an audiovisual data stream." Moreover, Lavelle does not disclose "a microcontroller for controlling said interface stage and said decoder." As explained below in detail, Lavelle does not disclose each and every element of claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

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a. “an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network”

The Examiner stated that a “bus interconnecting the plurality of devices” allegedly discloses “an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network,” as claim 1 recites. (Emphasis added) (See the Office Action, Page 2; Lavelle Col. 4, Line 66 – Col. 5, line 7; Col. 9, Line 60 – Col. 10, Line 2). However, Lavelle clearly indicates that the “the buses (170, 172) shown in FIG. 3 are simply aggregations of wires carrying similar types of signals, other types of buses may be employed. For example, one or more wires or other signal transmission means may be used for each of the audio and the video signals, with the signals being multiplexed with respect to, for example, time, frequency, or codes.” (See Col. 9, Lines 60-66).

Moreover, the busses are “aggregations of wires carrying similar types of signals.” (See Col. 9, Lines 60-61). Therefore, Lavelle discloses busses carrying discrete signals and does not disclose an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network. Indeed, a digital data network is not in any way disclosed by Lavelle.

Therefore, Lavelle does not show “an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network,” as claim 1 recites. For at least this reason, claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

b. “a multi-format decoder for decoding at least two different encoding formats for an audiovisual data stream”

The Examiner directs applicants to “signal processing/conversion facilities 127.” (See Lavelle, Col. 6, Lines 20-41; the Office Action, Page 2). However, claim 1 recites “a multi-format decoder” that Lavelle does not disclose. Moreover, claim 1 recites “for decoding at least two different encoding formats for an audiovisual data stream,” that Lavelle does not disclose. The disclosure of signal processing/conversion facilities 127 does not indicate “a multi-format decoder” or “at least two different encoding formats,” as claim 1 recites.

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i. "a multi-format decoder"

Lavelle does not disclose "a multi-format decoder." Lavelle merely lists a number of devices that may be included in entertainment unit 100. For example, "[t]he entertainment unit 100 includes at least one or any combination of a display device (hereinafter 'display device') 112, a TV tuner 114, a video cassette player (VCP) 116, a digital video disk (DVD) player 118, a compact disk (CD) player 120, an amplitude modulation/frequency modulation (AM/FM) radio 122, an external audio/video signal processor 124, a video game player 126, facilities for performing signal processing and/or signal conversion 127 (hereinafter 'signal processing/conversion facilities'), a first wireless transmitter 128, and a second wireless transmitter 130." (See Col. 4, Lines 18-29).

Claim 1 recites "a multi-format decoder." The signal processing/conversion facilities 127 is not a "a multi-format decoder," as the Examiner asserts. (See the Office Action, Page 2). The signal processing/conversion facilities 127 only possibly shows the use of a Digital Signal Processor (DSP) and facilities for performing encoding/decoding etc. (See Col. 6, Lines 27-30). However, use of a DSP and or performing encoding and decoding does not describe "a multi-format decoder," as claim 1 recites. (Emphasis added).

ii. "for decoding at least two different encoding formats for an audiovisual data stream"

Moreover, Lavelle does not disclose "at least two different encoding formats for an audiovisual data stream," as claim 1 recites. Lavelle discusses the possible types of devices used with entertainment unit 100, but does not disclose "at least two different encoding formats," if any.

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c. **“a microcontroller for controlling said interface stage and said decoder”**

Lavelle does not disclose “a microcontroller for controlling said interface stage and said decoder,” as claim 1 recites. The Examiner directs Applicants to a vague statement in Lavelle that discusses “various forms of hardware, software, firmware, special purpose processors, or a combination thereof.” (See Lavelle, Col. 3, Lines 25-44; The Office Action, Page 2). However, Lavelle does not disclose a level of detail necessary to show “a microcontroller for controlling said interface stage and said decoder,” as claim 1 recites. For example, Lavelle does not disclose “a microcontroller for controlling” an “interface stage.” Moreover, Lavelle does not disclose “a microcontroller for controlling” a “decoder.”

In sum, as explained above in detail, because Lavelle does not disclose each and every element of the claim, claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

B. Claim 7

Claim 7 depends from claim 1. Thus, for at least the same reasons as claim 1, claim 7 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, in addition to the reasons for the independent claim, claim 7 includes additional reasons for allowability.

Claim 7 recites, in part:

wherein said decoder outputs a decoded audio signal to said interface stage for transmission over said digital network.

(Emphasis added). However, Lavelle does not disclose at least “a decoded audio signal” and “for transmission over said digital network,” as claim 7 recites. The Examiner cited a passage of Lavelle that discusses signal processing/conversion facilities 127. (See the Office Action, Page 3; Lavelle, Col. 6, Lines 20-42). However, stating the existence of a signal processing/conversion facility does not disclose “a decoded audio signal” and “for transmission

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over said digital network,” that claim 7 recites. Thus, because Lavelle does not disclose each and every limitation of claim 7, claim 7 is in condition for allowance.

C. Claim 9

Claim 9 depends from claim 1. Thus, for at least the same reasons as claim 1, claim 9 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, in addition to the reasons for the independent claim, claim 9 includes additional reasons for allowability.

Claim 9 recites, in part:

wherein said decoder decodes a data stream output by any of an audio CD player, a DVD player, VCD player or a wireless receiver.

(Emphasis added). Lavelle does not at least disclose “said decoder decodes a data stream output,” as claim 9 recites. The Examiner points to a DVD player and a wireless receiver as allegedly anticipating the claim elements. (See the Office Action, Page 3). However, the existence of multiple types of devices does not show “wherein said decoder decodes a data stream.” (Emphasis added). Therefore, because Lavelle does not disclose each and every element, claim 9 is in condition for allowance.

D. Independent Claim 11

Claim 11 recites, in part:

a digital data network installed in a vehicle;
at least one storage, playback or receiver device on-board said vehicle for
providing an encoded audiovisual data stream to said digital data network;
at least one audiovisual output device connected to said digital data network; and
a multi-format decoder board for decoding audiovisual data streams in a plurality
of encoding formats, said decoder board decoding said audiovisual data
stream for use by said at least one audiovisual output device;
wherein said decoder board comprises:
an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network;

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a multi-format decoder for decoding at least two different encoding formats for an audiovisual data stream;
a microcontroller for controlling said interface stage and said decoder; and
connections for connecting said decoder board to one or more audiovisual output devices.

(Emphasis added). Lavelle does not disclose at least the claim elements argued in detail below. Because Lavelle does not disclose each and every element, claim 11 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, Applicants reserve the right to argue other patentable aspects of the claims in future communications.

a. “a digital data network installed in a vehicle”

Lavelle does not disclose “a digital data network installed in a vehicle.” Lavelle discloses “a video bus 170” and an “audio bus 172.” (See Col. 5, Lines 3-7). The Examiner directs Applicants to numerous passages in Lavelle but does not show “a digital data network installed in a vehicle.” (See the Office Action, Page 3; See Lavelle, Col. 6, Lines 28-42). Moreover, the existence of “video bus 170” and “audio bus 172” does not disclose “a digital data network.” (See Col. 5, Lines 3-7).

b. “for providing an encoded audiovisual data stream”

Lavelle does not disclose the recited “for providing an encoded audiovisual data stream.” The Examiner points to a passage of Lavelle that does not show the claim elements. (See the Office Action, Page 4; Lavelle, Col. 6, Lines 28-42). Lavelle shows an encoded wireless signal to prevent interference between the two wireless headphone sets. (See Col. 6, Lines 42-45). However, in the context of the claim, the headset wireless signal does not disclose “for providing an encoded audiovisual data stream,” as claim 11 recites. Moreover, the claim element includes a “visual” component of the “audiovisual data stream” that Lavelle does not disclose.

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c. "at least one audiovisual output device connected to said digital data network"

Lavelle does not disclose "at least one audiovisual output device connected to said digital data network." (Emphasis added). As discussed above, Lavelle does not disclose "a digital data network." Thus, because Lavelle does not disclose a digital data network, Lavelle cannot disclose "at least one audiovisual output device" connected to "said digital data network," as claim 11 recites.

d. "a multi-format decoder board"

Lavelle does not disclose "a multi-format decoder board for decoding audiovisual data streams in a plurality of encoding formats, said decoder board decoding said audiovisual data stream for use by said at least one audiovisual output device." (Emphasis added). The Examiner has not shown where in Lavelle these claim elements are particularly shown. In short, the Examiner points to a vague passage that discloses a central processing unit (CPU), random access memory (RAM), and input output (I/O) interfaces. (See Col. 3, Lines 25-44). However, citing a processing unit does not disclose "a multi-format decoder board" of claim 11.

e. "an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network"

Lavelle does not disclose "an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network." As discussed above, Lavelle does not disclose "a digital data network." Thus, Lavelle cannot disclose "an interface stage for interfacing with a digital data network," as claim 11 recites. (Emphasis added).

f. "at least two different encoding formats for an audiovisual data stream"

Lavelle does not disclose "a multi-format decoder for decoding at least two different encoding formats for an audiovisual data stream." As discussed above in detail with respect to claim 1, Lavelle does not disclose these claim elements.

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g. "a microcontroller for controlling said interface stage and said decoder"

Lavelle does not disclose "a microcontroller for controlling said interface stage and said decoder." As discussed above in detail with respect to claim 1, Lavelle does not disclose these claim elements.

In sum, as explained above in detail, because Lavelle does not disclose each and every element of the claim, claim 11 is in condition for allowance.

E. Claim 17

Claim 17 depends from claim 11. Thus, for at least the same reasons as claim 11, claim 17 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, in addition to the reasons for the independent claim, claim 17 includes additional reasons for allowability.

Claim 17 recites, in part:

said decoder outputs a decoded audio signal to said interface stage for transmission over said digital network.

(Emphasis added). However, as explained above in detail with respect to claim 1, Lavelle does not disclose at least "said digital network." The busses are "aggregations of wires carrying similar types of signals." (See Col. 9, Lines 60-61). Therefore, Lavelle discloses busses carrying discrete signals. Indeed, a digital data network is not disclosed by Lavelle. Thus, Lavelle cannot disclose "a decoded audio signal to said interface stage for transmission over said digital network." Therefore, claim 17 is in condition for allowance.

F. Claim 19

Claim 19 depends from claim 11. Thus, for at least the same reasons as claim 11, claim 19 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, in addition to the reasons for the independent claim, claim 19 includes additional reasons for allowability.

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Claim 19 recites, in part:

said decoder decodes a data stream output by any of an audio CD player, a DVD player, a VCD player or a wireless receiver.

(Emphasis added). The Examiner points to a passage of Lavelle that discloses a DVD player and a wireless receiver. (See the Office Action, Page 5; Lavelle, Col. 4, Lines 16-30). The passage from Lavelle is a wireless transmitter 128 and a second wireless transmitter 130. However, the passage does not disclose where a decoder “decodes a data stream output by” (emphasis added) any of an audio CD player, a DVD player, a VCD player or a wireless receiver.

Lavelle shows wireless transmitters for sending audio to headsets but does not disclose a decoder that “decodes a data stream output by,” for example, a wireless receiver. (See Col. 4, Lines 59-65). Moreover, “a wireless receiver” (emphasis added) is not disclosed. Thus, claim 19 is in condition for allowance because Lavelle does not disclose each and every element of claim 19.

G. Claims 22 and 24-28

Claims 22 and 24-28 depend from claim 11. Thus, for at least the same reasons as claim 11, claims 22 and 24-28 are in condition for allowance. Moreover, in addition to the reasons for the independent claim, claims 22 and 24-28 include additional reasons for allowability.

Claims 22 and 24-28 include claim elements connecting to a digital data network. (As amended). As discussed above in detail with respect to claim 11, Lavelle does not disclose a digital data network. Thus, because a digital data network is not disclosed, the claim elements of claims 22 and 24-28 cannot be “connecting to a digital data network.” For at least this reason, claims 22 and 24-28 are in condition for allowance.

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H. Independent Claim 29

Claim 29 recites:

A method of handling a digital data stream carrying data encoded in a plurality of different encoding formats, said method comprising processing said digital data stream through a decoder board that comprises a multi-format decoder for decoding at least two different encoding formats for audiovisual data and output a resulting decoded audiovisual signal to one or more audiovisual output devices.

(Emphasis added). However, Lavelle does not disclose each and every limitation of claim 29. As explained below in detail, Lavelle does not disclose at least “a digital data stream,” “data encoded in a plurality of different encoding formats,” “processing said digital data stream through a decoder board,” “a multi-format decoder,” “decoding at least two different encoding formats,” and an “output a resulting decoded audiovisual signal.” At least because Lavelle does not disclose every element of the claim, claim 29 is in condition for allowance.

a. “digital data stream”

Lavelle does not disclose a “digital data stream,” as claim 29 recites. Lavelle indicates that the “the buses (170, 172) shown in FIG. 3 are simply aggregations of wires carrying similar types of signals, other types of buses may be employed. For example, one or more wires or other signal transmission means may be used for each of the audio and the video signals, with the signals being multiplexed with respect to, for example, time, frequency, or codes.” (See Col. 9, Lines 60-66). Moreover, the busses are simply “aggregations of wires carrying similar types of signals.” (See Col. 9, Lines 60-61). Thus, Lavelle does not show a “digital data stream.”

b. “multi-format decoder”

Lavelle does not disclose a “multi-format decoder.” The signal processing/conversion facilities 127 is not a “multi-format decoder” as the Examiner asserts. (See the Office Action, Page 2). The signal processing/conversion facilities 127 only disclose a possible inclusion of a Digital Signal Processor (DSP) and facilities for performing encoding/decoding, etc. (See Col.

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6, Lines 27-30). However, the existence of a DSP does not disclose “a multi-format decoder,” as claim 29 recites. (Emphasis added).

c. “decoding at least two different encoding formats”

Lavelle does not disclose “decoding at least two different encoding formats,” as claim 29 recites. Lavelle discusses the possible types of devices used with entertainment unit 100, but does not disclose at least two different encoding formats.

In sum, as explained above in detail, because Lavelle does not disclose each and every element of the claim, claim 29 is in condition for allowance.

I. Claim 30

Claim 30 depends from claim 29. Thus, for at least the same reasons as claim 29, claim 30 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, in addition to the reasons for the independent claim, claim 30 includes additional reasons for allowability.

Claim 30 recites, in part:

interfacing said decoder board to a digital data network with an interface stage,
said digital data stream coming to said decoder board via said digital data
network.

(Emphasis added). However, Lavelle does not disclose a “digital data network,” an “interface stage,” and a “digital data stream,” as claim 30 recites. Thus, claim 30 is in condition for allowance.

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J. Independent Claim 36

Claim 36 recites, in part:

interface means for interfacing with a digital data network;
multi-format decoder means for decoding at least two different encoding formats
for an audiovisual data stream;
controller means for controlling said interface and said decoder; and
output means for connecting said decoder board to one or more audiovisual
output devices.

(Emphasis added). Lavelle does not disclose each and every limitation of claim 36, as discussed below in detail. For example, Lavelle does not disclose an “interface means for interfacing with a digital data network,” a “multi-format decoder means,” and a “controller means for controlling said interface stage and said decoder.” At least because Lavelle does not disclose these claim elements, claim 36 is in condition for allowance.

a. “interface means for interfacing with a digital data network”

Lavelle does not disclose an “interface means for interfacing with a digital data network,” as claim 36 recites. As discussed at length above with respect to claims 1 and 11, Lavelle does not disclose a “digital data network.” Thus, Lavelle cannot disclose an “interface means” as claimed because Lavelle does not disclose a “digital data network” that the “interface means” interfaces with. Therefore, claim 36 is in condition for allowance.

b. “multi-format decoder means”

Lavelle does not disclose a “multi-format decoder means,” as discussed in detail above with respect to claims 1, 11, and 29. The signal processing/conversion facilities 127 only disclose a possible inclusion of a Digital Signal Processor (DSP) and facilities for performing encoding/decoding, etc. (See Col. 6, Lines 27-30). However, the existence of a DSP does not disclose “a multi-format decoder means,” as claim 36 recites. Thus, claim 36 is in condition for allowance.

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c. **“controller means for controlling said interface and said decoder”**

As discussed above in detail, Lavelle neither discloses the “interface” nor the “decoder.” Thus, Lavelle cannot disclose the “controller means” for controlling an “interface” and a “decoder.”

For at least these reasons, claim 36 is in condition for allowance.

K. Claim 40

Claim 40 depends from claim 36. Thus, for at least the same reasons as claim 36, claim 40 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, in addition to the reasons for the independent claim, claim 40 includes additional reasons for allowability.

Claim 40 recites, in part:

said decoder decodes a data stream output by any of an audio CD player, a DVD player, a VCD player or a wireless receiver.

(Emphasis added). The Examiner cited a passage from Lavelle that broadly discloses types of devices for use with an entertainment unit. (See the Office Action, Page 8; Lavelle, Col. 4, Lines 16-30). However, Lavelle does not disclose the “decoder” and “a data stream output by” an audio CD player, a DVD player, a VCD player or a wireless receiver. As claim 40 recites, the output of the devices is “a data stream,” where the decoder decodes the data stream. Moreover, Lavelle does not disclose “a wireless receiver.” At most, Lavelle discloses a wireless transmitter. (See Lavelle, Col. 4, Lines 28-29). Therefore, because Lavelle does not disclose each and every element, claim 40 is in condition for allowance.

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Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 31, 34, 35, 37, 39 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lavelle. Applicants note that the Examiner may have made a typographical error in citing claim 4 as being rejected under § 103. (See the Office Action, Page 8).

Applicants note that claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 31, 34, 35, 37, 39 and 41 depend from parent claims argued above. Thus, for at least the same reasons as their associated parent claims, claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 31, 34, 35, 37, 39 and 41 are in condition for allowance. Moreover, in addition to the reasons for their associated parent claims, claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 31, 34, 35, 37, 39 and 41 include additional reasons for allowability. Applicants respectfully traverse the foregoing rejections.

Official Notice

In rejecting claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 31, 34, 35, 37, 39 and 41, the Examiner has taken official notice of various claim elements. Applicants have doubts about these numerous assertions at least because the claim elements rejected are not notoriously well known in the art, particularly in the context of the claimed invention.

For example, claims 2, 12, 31, and 37 recite various optical elements. The Examiner stated that “it was notoriously well known in the art at the time of invention by applicant to utilize fiber optic lines for a network of interconnected devices.” (See the Office Action, Page 9). However, Applicants do not believe that such optical systems were notoriously well known in the context of the claimed invention. Moreover, applicants doubt that such optical systems were notoriously well known for the interconnection of elements as claimed.

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Thus, Applicants request support for the taking of Official Notice, as provided by 37 C.F.R. 1.104(d)(2) and MPEP § 2144.03, in the context of the claimed invention, for claim 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 31, 34, 35, 37, 39 and 41. If documentary evidence of such Official Notice is not provided in the next Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that the Section 103 rejections must be withdrawn.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 18-0013, under Order No. 65783-0007 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw. To the extent necessary, a petition for extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made, the fee for which should be charged to such deposit account number.

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Respectfully submitted,

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